

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on October 10, 2003. Claims 1, 3, 13, 16, and 18 have been amended and claims 2, 9, 17 and 26 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3-8, 10-16, 18-25 and 27-34 remain in the present application. Applicants note and appreciate Examiner's allowance of claims 4 and 19. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness. Claim 3 has been amended to overcome this rejection and Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

The Specification has been objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter, in particular with reference to claim 2. While Applicants respectfully transverse this rejection in view of Applicants' disclosure at page 5, line 11 through page 6, line 23 and the corresponding figures, which clearly describe and illustrate these structural elements, Applicants have canceled claim 2 so that the rejection is now moot.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 13-18, 20-21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 33 and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Neyer, U.S. Patent No. 4,000,539. Claims 7, 22 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as

being unpatentable over Neyer. Lastly, claims 11, 12, 28, 29, 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Neyer in view of Baxter, U.S. Patent No. 4,824,136. While Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1 and 16 to more sharply define the present invention over the prior art record and respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

In particular, Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1 and 16 to recite that the cap portion has a support portion extending outwardly from the collar structure and the barrier plate is supported by the support portion and defines an exposed upper surface of the cover. Independent claims 1 and 16 have further been amended to recite that a portion of the support portion extends over the barrier plate and the exposed upper surface defined thereby. Support for this amendment is provided in Applicants' disclosure at Page 6, line 12 through Page 7, line 3, for example, and in the figures as well.

In one embodiment, for example and without limitation, material of the support portion (26) extends through apertures (30) provided in the barrier plate (24) to define connector portions (32) which terminate in enlarged head portions (34) located on the upper surface (28) of the barrier plate (24). As shown in Fig. 4, the enlarged head portions (34) extend over the barrier plate and the exposed upper surface defined thereby. As shown most clearly in Figs. 1 and 4, the support portion (26) may be formed with an upwardly extending peripheral flange (36) and

a flange portion (38) which extends inwardly over the exposed upper surface (28) defined by the barrier plate (24). Therefore, each of the enlarged head portions (34) and the flange portion (38) extends over the exposed upper surface (28) defined by the barrier plate (24) in the exemplary embodiment shown and described.

Applicants respectfully submit that in the hollow knob of Neyer, the lower portion or shell (14) does not extend over the upper portion or shell (16) as now claimed by Applicants. Rather, the upper portion or shell (16) has a recessed seat (62) having a v-shaped rib (64) which is welded to the upper edge (20) of the lower portion or shell (14) (see Column 2, line 47 through Column 3, line 19). Accordingly, Neyer taken alone, or in combination with the other prior art record, is completely silent with respect to the combination of features as now recited in amended claims 1 and 16 and Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

Moreover, as claims 3-8, 10-15, 18-25 and 27-34 depend from allowable independent claims 1 and 16, respectively, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of elements not taught or suggested by the prior art record, Applicants submit that these claims are allowable as well.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If there is any issue that remains which may be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve the same and expedite the allowance of this application.

Applicants do not believe that this response requires that any fees be submitted, however, if any fees are deemed necessary, these may be charged to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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